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# INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDIES.

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PREPARED BY

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## THIRTY-SIXTH STUDY.—THE PROPHECIES OF ZEPHANIAH AND HABAKKUK.

[The material of this "study" is furnished by Professor Burroughs. It is edited by Professor Harper.]

### I. PRELIMINARY NOTES.

1. The prophets Zephaniah, Habakkuk and Jeremiah belong to the kingdom of Judah, in the Babylonian period.\* The characteristics of this period shed much light upon their utterances. It was a time of wide-spread and increasing corruption. In the face of judgments, the nation is presumptuous in self-confidence and obstinate in sin. Attempted reformation is futile. False prophets abound and are strong in influence. The true prophets of Jehovah suffer persecution. The Babylonian power, the instrument of the divine judgment, arises, threatens and at length executes. Judah falls before it, as the kingdom of the north had fallen before Assyria.
2. The prophecy of this period is characterized chiefly by denunciation, yet is not without consolation. For Judah there exists a larger hope than, previously, for Israel. She is not completely apostate, nor is she to disappear finally from history. Moreover, the time is peculiarly ripe for the proclamation of the world-judgment, and in this is found hope for the remnant of Judah.
3. The leading figure of the times is Jeremiah. His ministry was long in duration; the record of it is extensive. The activity of his contemporaries was shorter; their recorded prophecies are brief. Yet their missions were far from being without importance; the books bearing their names, though short, abound in great and striking thoughts, and are deserving of most careful study. Zephaniah, occupying what may be considered as the transition position between the Assyrian and Babylonian periods, emphasizes especially "the day of Jehovah" and its results. His message, strongly positive, is directed principally to Judah. Habakkuk has left us one of the most beautiful books of Hebrew literature. His message is particularly directed against Babylon. Especially does he emphasize abiding faithfulness toward Jehovah.

### II. THE BIBLICAL LESSON.

#### A. The Prophecy of Zephaniah.†

1. *Read carefully*, making use of the Revision, the Book of Zephaniah, (1) noting any expressions which appear obscure, and (2) endeavoring to gain a general conception of its contents. Consider the following questions:  
(1) Does the prophecy present itself to you as a connected whole? Do you discover internal logical unity? Is there progress in thought? Along what line, or lines, does the thought move?

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\* See the first "study."

† The following literature may be consulted: Delitzsch, "O. T. Hist. of Redemption," § 61, p. 127 seq.; von Orelli, "O. T. Prophecy," pp. 314-323; Briggs, "Messianic Prophecies," pp. 220-226; Ewald, "Prophets of the O. T.," vol. 3, pp. 14-26; Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," vol. 5, pp. 125-135; Pusey, "Minor Prophets;" Keil and Delitzsch, "Minor Prophets," "Zephaniah," C. F. Keil; Lange's Com., "Zephaniah," Paul Kleinert and Charles Elliott; Smith's Bible Dict., "Zephaniah."

- (2) What transitions do you discover? How do these stand related to the paragraphs indicated in the Revision? Would you desire to indicate any additional paragraphs? Where (especially in chs. 2 and 3)?
  - (3) What is the relation of these several paragraphs to one another, in the order of their occurrence? How do the several steps in the progress of the thought thus disclose themselves?
  - (4) As a result of this examination, into what main portions would you divide the book? How would you briefly state its contents?
2. *Re-read* ch. 1, and consider the following matters:
- (1) Into how many parts would you divide the chapter, following the paragraphs of the Revision? How would you characterize each?
  - (2) In the section vs. 2-6, would you make a further break at v. 4? What is the thought of vs. 2,3? How are vs. 4-6 related to vs. 2,3? What situation is disclosed in vs. 4-6? What classes, religiously, exist in Jerusalem? Paraphrase vs. 4-6.
  - (3) In the section vs. 7-18, would you mark a transition at v. 14? What is the thought of vs. 7-13? What of vs. 14-18? What is the figure of v. 7? see 1 Sam. 16:5; Isa. 13:3. Who are the "sacrifice"? Who the "guests"? What is the meaning of vs. 10,11?
  - (4) Consider vs. 14-18 in connection with similar passages in previous prophets. See Joel 2:1 seq.; Amos 5:18-20, etc.\* How universal is the judgment of "Jehovah's Day" to be?
3. *Re-read* ch. 2.
- (1) Divide this ch. at v. 4. How would you characterize vs. 1-3? How vs. 4-15? In vs. 1-3, how is the certainty of the judgment indicated? How its rapid approach? What can alone save from this judgment? Meaning of "meek of the earth"? How extensive the expression? Is there a contrast with "nation that hath no shame" (v. 1)?
  - (2) Divide vs. 4-15 into three portions. Indicate these. In what order are the surrounding nations spoken of? Why thus? Compare Amos 1:3-2:4. What is the relation of vs. 4-15 to vs. 1-3? Have we here an enforcement of the preceding exhortation? How?
  - (3) Make a special study of v. 11. See Isa. chs. 24-27. Meaning of "isles of the nations"? Cf. Isa. 24:15, and note, with concordance, use of "isles" throughout Isaiah. "Every one from his place"? Cf. Isa. 19:19 seq.; Mal. 1:11, etc. What is the great thought of this verse?
4. *Re-read* ch. 3.
- (1) Divide this chapter at v. 8. What is the thought of vs. 1-7? What of vs. 8-20? What is the relation of ch. 2:4-15 to 3:1-7? see vs. 6,7. Wherein is Jerusalem peculiarly inexcusable? see vs. 2,5. How is the wide-spread and terrible corruption demonstrated? see vs. 3,4.
  - (2) What is the connection between v. 8 and vs. 9-20? Is the universal judgment only a means? What is the end in view? What will be its results?
  - (3) Divide vs. 9-20 at v. 11 and also at v. 14. (a) In vs. 9,10, what result of the judgment is stated? Meaning of "pure language" (v. 9)? "one consent"? see Isa. 18:7; 19:18-25. (b) In vs. 11-13, what result of the judgment is set forth? What will be the character of Jerusalem's purification? cf. Isa. 29:19; 33:24, etc. What figures are here employed? (c) In vs. 14-20, what is the character of Jerusalem's salvation? Enumerate its elements? Wherein is the height of joy found? see v. 17. Cf. Hos. 2:19,20; Isa. 65:19.†
5. In view of the preceding study, arrange the prophecy according to these three thoughts: (1) judgment; (2) its cause; (3) the resulting salvation.

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\* See "study" twenty-five, p. 227, 2 (3).

† See "study" twenty-four, p. 206, (3).

**B. The Prophecy of Habakkuk.\***

**1. Read, slowly and thoughtfully, in the Revision, the Book of Habakkuk.**

- (1) Into what two parts does the book divide itself in its outward form?
- (2) Do you also find an inward contrast in the feelings of the prophet as they give themselves expression in these two parts?
- (3) Does the same theme, however, appear clearly to run through both parts? Is there, thus, such a connection of thought as discloses the unity of the book?
- (4) How would you, after this first reading, briefly and roughly state the subject of the book?

**2. Re-read chs. 1 and 2.**

- (1) Do you discover in these chapters a dialogue between the prophet and Jehovah?
- (2) Analyze as follows: (a) title; (b) the prophet's first complaint; (c) the response of Jehovah; (d) the prophet's second complaint; (e) the second response of Jehovah. Indicate the verses belonging to these sections severally.
- (3) In ch. 1:2-4, what evils of the time are spoken of? In vs. 5-11, what is the thought? What is the disposition of this conquering world-power? see v. 11. In vs. 12-17, what moral difficulty does the prophet give expression to?
- (4) In ch. 2:1, what is the prophet's attitude toward Jehovah? Subdivide 2:2-20 into six portions, consisting of introductory statements followed by five woes.
- (5) Make a special study of 2:2-4. How is the importance of the revelation to be given indicated? How is the assurance of its accomplishment expressed? How is the judgment of the Chaldean related to his character? What contrast is found in v. 4? Meaning of "just"? "faith"? What is the essence of this "central oracle" of the prophecy?

**2. Re-read ch. 3.**

- (1) Note the title, subscription and expression "selah." Is it probable that the prayer, or hymn, of the prophet was intended for use in the temple service? Does this "prayer" stand in peculiar relation to 2:20? see vs. 3-15, cf. marginal note v. 3. Have we here, therefore, a representation of the appearance of Jehovah to judge and to save? How are the elements of the description of the theophany related to former manifestations of Jehovah? Compare Deut. 33; Judg. 5; Ps. 18, etc. How does the prophet express his feelings in the presence of the divine manifestation? see vs. 16-19.‡

III. SPECIAL TOPICS.

- 1. The Prophets Zephaniah and Habakkuk; their Dates.** (1) What may be, perhaps, inferred, from Zeph. 1:1, as to the ancestry of Zephaniah? What objections may be raised to the inference? (2) What may be possibly inferred, from Hab. ch. 3, subscription, as to the descent of Habakkuk? What objections might be offered? (3) In what reign is the prophecy of Zephaniah placed? Zeph. 1:1. Judging from the contents of the book in connection with the history of Josiah and his reforms, in what portion of his reign would you place it? (4) How, from the contents of these two books considered in relation to the history of the times, would you infer

\* The following literature may be consulted: Delitzsch, "O. T. Hist. of Redemption," § 60, p. 125 seq.; von Orelli, "O. T. Prophecy," p. 323-329; Briggs, "Messianic Prophecies," pp. 232-236; Ewald, "Prophecs of the O. T.," vol. 3, pp. 27-48; Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," vol. 5, pp. 353-363; Pusey, "Minor Prophets;" Kell and Delitzsch, "Minor Prophets;" Lange's Com., "Habakkuk," Paul Kleinert and Charles Elliott; Smith's Bible Dictionary, "Habakkuk."

† Compare Micah chs. 6 and 7. See "study" twenty-first, p. 263, 5.

‡ See especially von Orelli, pp. 325-327.

§ See especially Briggs, "Messianic Prophecies," pp. 233-236, for translation and arrangement in strophes of ch. 3.

the priority of Zephaniah ? see 2:13-15, etc. Comparing the contents of the Book of Habakkuk with historical statements, do you think it possible to fix its date more definitely than not long after Zephaniah ? see 1:5 ; Jer. 36:27-31, etc.

- 2. The Style of the Prophets ; Contrasts between them.** (1) What are the striking characteristics of Zephaniah's style ? What of the style of Habakkuk ? Which is the more ornate ? Which the more compressed and vigorous ? (2) Which of the two prophets is the more influenced by preceding prophetic writings ? Which is the more original ? (3) Contrast the teachings of Zephaniah and Habakkuk. How do they severally represent the qualities essential to the obtaining of Jehovah's grace and salvation ? Contrast their Messianic utterances. Which appear the more important ?

### THIRTY-SEVENTH STUDY.—THE REIGNS OF JEHOIAKIM AND ZEDEKIAH.

[The material of this "study" is furnished by Professor Beecher. It is edited by Professor Harper.]

*Prepare for recitation* 2 Kgs. 23:29-25:30 ; 2 Chron. 35:20-36:23, and parallel passages, in the order of the following topics :

- 1. Death of Josiah,** B. C. 608, 2 Kgs. 23:29,30 ; 2 Chron. 35:20-25. (1) Trace on the map the route of Necho's expedition, and the site of Megiddo. (2) 2 Kgs. 23:29, "king of Assyria:" (a) was the Assyrian empire still in existence ? (b) or is the term here used in a general sense, as in Ezra 6:22 ? (3) from reading the history of the great empires of the East, what do you learn as to the importance of the movements of which this expedition formed a part ?
- 2. Jehoahaz,** three months of B. C. 608. (1) 1 Chron. 3:15 ; Jer. 22:11,12 ; 2 Kgs. 23:31,36, his name ; it was originally Shallum, and not Johanan. (2) 2 Kgs. 23:30-33 ; 2 Chron. 36:1-3, the tenure by which he held the throne. (3) 2 Kgs. 23:32, character of his reign. (4) Jer. 22:11,12, did he die directly after going to Egypt ?
- 3. Jehoiakim's Accession,** 608 B. C., his "first year" being the year 607 B. C. 2 Kgs. 23:33-36 ; 2 Chron. 36:3-5. (1) His tenure of the throne. (2) The fine, why levied, and how paid ? (3) General character of his reign.
- 4. "The Beginning" of his Reign,** perhaps B. C. 607, 606. (1) Jer. 26:20-23, the prophesying and death of Urijah (by extradition from Egypt). (2) Jer. 26, the trial of Jeremiah for prophesying. (3) Jer. 7-10, fuller text of the prophecies for which he was tried, cf. 7:2 and 26:2 : (a) 7:12-15 and 26:6,9, etc. ; 9:11, cf. 26,9, the two specifications of the charge ; (b) 26:17-19, the precedent cited in Jeremiah's favor ; (c) 26:20-23, the precedent cited against him. (4) Inference from these prophecies as to Jehoiakim's position in regard to the reforms made by Josiah. (5) The condition of Judah at this time, as exhibited in these chapters. (6) Jer. 8:20, at what date did the case of Judah become irretrievable ? (7) Jer. 7:29-34 ; 8:18-22 ; 9:1-6, 17-22, etc., can you connect these "Lamentations" with the death of